

BELOVED COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL



FAMILY HANDBOOK

2014-2015

THE PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook has been created to provide you important information about BelovED, and to ensure that scholars and their families have a clear understanding of School expectations.

BelovED will review school values and school behavior and academic expectations with its scholars in September, and repeatedly throughout the school year. Meanwhile, at school orientations, and at later one-on-one meetings, parents and guardians will have ample opportunities to ask the School's teachers about these expectations, and to discuss plans for helping scholars meet those expectations.

*But we believe it is important for parents and guardians to review school expectations with their young scholars **at home, too, at the very beginning of the school year.***

So please acknowledge receipt of this Handbook by signing and returning the Acknowledgement of Receipt you will be provided, and then review what is in this Handbook with your BelovED scholar(s).

This will help them make a strong start!

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BELOVED'S MISSION

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., believed that "Our ultimate end must be the creation of the Beloved Community," by which he meant a society in which people care about one another and perceive their well-being as connected to every other person. "We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality," he said. "The I cannot attain fulfillment without the Thou."

At BelovED Community Charter School, we share Dr. King's convictions and believe that an educational experience which makes children feel loved, that leads them to care about one another and to want to develop their minds and potential to positively contribute to their communities, and that successfully teaches the high level skills and knowledge necessary to make such contributions, will produce a more caring, prosperous, and happy world for everyone.

Thus the mission of the Beloved Community Charter School is to develop values, skills, knowledge, confidence and character in its students that will lead them to care not only about themselves, but also about their peers and humankind; will propel them to success at the school, in college, and in their careers; and will help them realize the fulfillment of a socially contributory life.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Beloved Community Charter School is characterized by a school climate that is orderly, supportive, and focused on academic work. We strive to ensure that our scholars feel they are cared for by the entire faculty and staff, and feel that their life within the school is meaningful. Ensuring that rules are fairly and consistently enforced, building a sense of community within the school, and actively engaging students in their learning reduces disruptions and problems.

Core Values

To build a true sense of *beloved* community, we endeavor to create a culture of mutual respect and care. Our values and character education curriculum emphasizes five core values:

- Respect and Care about Yourself;
- Respect and Care about Others;
- Respect and Care about Your Family;
- Respect and Care about Your Communities (including this school community); and
- Respect and Care about the World.

Respect

As you can see, Respect is the cornerstone of our values system. Helping students develop the art of respect is a school-wide goal. All of the adults at BelovED endeavor to model respect in their interactions with our scholars and with one another. Meanwhile, a sampling of the ways in which our scholars are expected to demonstrate respect include:

RESPECT AND CARE FOR YOURSELF ó Scholars are expected, by their manners and in their school uniform dress, to carry themselves with a sense of dignity.

RESPECT AND CARE FOR OTHERS ó Scholars are expected to show support and encouragement for one another; to refrain from insulting, bullying, or humiliating others; and to refrain from physically, emotionally or sexually harassing other students.

RESPECT AND CARE FOR YOUR FAMILY ó Scholars are expected to respect and care for their family, and to practice this by respecting and caring for their school family. To this end, they are expected to listen and follow instructions given by their parents/guardians and by their teachers; to use an appropriate tone of voice at home and in school; and to be honest and helpful to family and school family members.

RESPECT AND CARE FOR YOUR COMMUNITY ó Scholars are expected to respect their personal property and the property of other students; to maintain their textbooks and other school materials; and to care for the school grounds and property, pitching in to keep them clean and neat.

RESPECT AND CARE FOR THE WORLD ó Scholars are expected to demonstrate respect for all people; to refrain from the use of hurtful stereotypes; and to show sensitivity relating to physical, cultural, religious, gender, and sexual orientation differences.

STAR Behaviors

To help our scholars develop the art of respect, we expect them to practice STAR behaviors:

S - *Stand/Sit Up Straight*

Students are expected to demonstrate good posture at all times. Unless given permission, students may not put their heads down on their desks. When sitting on a chair, students must sit with their bottom on the chair. When standing, students must have equal weight on both feet and their hands behind their backs or by their sides. When sitting on the rug, students must sit in a "Criss-Cross Applesauce" style and have their hands folded and in their laps.

T - *Track The Speaker With Your Eyes*

Students are expected to track the speaker at all times. When the teacher is talking, scholars need to follow the teacher with their eyes. Scholars should also track any student who has been given permission to speak by the teacher. Tracking the speaker will help all scholars to stay on task and concentrate on instruction. It is also the polite thing to do.

A - *Always Be On Task*

During instruction, scholars are expected to be on task 100% of the time with very few reminders by teachers. Students ask and answer questions by raising their hand and waiting for the teacher to call on them.

R - *Respect Your Teachers And Classmates At All Times*

There are no excuses for disrespectful behavior at BelovED Community Charter School. A student who has a disagreement with another student is expected to follow a three-step procedure in order to address the problem: (1) ignore the offending student, (2) ask the offending student to stop, or (3), if the first two steps don't solve the problem, tell the teacher. Students who have been corrected by a teacher may not respond to that correction in a way other than following the directions given by the teacher. If a student feels that a consequence has been unfairly applied, the student may speak to the teacher after the lesson has ended. The teacher has the right to disagree with the student. All decisions made by the teacher will be final.

Consequences

When students break BelovED's code of conduct, the teacher will correct them, review the correct behavior, and practice the correct behavior with them. If the behavior continues, the students will face a series of consequences agreed upon and supported by teachers and parents. These consequences are designed to correct misbehavior and deter students from making poor choices in the future. In administering consequences, school personnel will take into account such factors as the severity of the offense, the age of the student offenders, students' histories and/or other inappropriate behaviors, and any other factors deemed relevant.

ACADEMICS AT BELOVED

BelovED's Academic Program and Extended School Day

BelovED Community Charter School maintains a rigorous academic program that prepares scholars to graduate from a four-year college and enjoy unlimited career opportunities.

Important elements of BelovED's academic program include:

- An extended school day (students go to school from 8:00 a.m. to 4:15 p.m);
- Top-Notch, Caring Teachers;
- A rigorous curriculum, supported by BelovED's positive values and character education program; and
- Highly effective instructional methodologies which combine the *Teach Like a Champion* pedagogical practices of America's top-performing charter school operators with a proven education program licensed from SABIS Educational Systems.

Arrival and Dismissal

School begins at 8:00 a.m. Students may arrive at any time after 7:40 a.m.

Students are dismissed at 4:15 p.m. Please be at the school on time to pick up your child. (Students not picked up after fifteen minutes will be sent to the paid After- School Program. This will incur a fee.)

Top Notch, Caring Teachers

BelovED Community Charter School has quality, caring teachers in every classroom who model a positive disposition; maintain orderly, decorated classrooms; guide our scholars using constructive feedback, positive reinforcement, and recognition of success; and possess very strong classroom management skills. To continually up-grade their skills further, our teachers work together in professional learning communities to share ideas, collaboratively improve their practice, and identify potential improvements in school and education program design. Moreover, our staff members go through a two-week training institute each summer, and then receive on-going professional development training all throughout the year.

The Common Core and New Jersey’s Curriculum Content Standards

Beloved Community Charter School is committed to the nationwide effort to improve public education. It supports New Jersey’s adoption of the Common Core Curriculum in English Language Arts and Mathematics, as well as New Jersey’s challenging Core Curriculum Content Standards in other subject areas, including Science, Social Studies, Visual and Performing Arts, World Languages (Spanish), Health and Physical Education, Technology, and 21st Century Life and Careers.

These curriculum content standards ensure that students receive a rigorous, well-balanced education. For instance, the arts curriculum includes instruction not only in the visual arts and in music, but also in dance and theater.

We expect all of BelovED’s students to graduate from a four-year college, but we believe New Jersey’s curriculum content standards align with the knowledge and skills that will be needed by students regardless of the post-secondary opportunities they pursue: four-year college, community college, technical training, military service, or direct entry into the workplace.

Moreover, these standards incorporate teaching and learning disciplines that will become ever more important in the 21st-century, as the mastery of new skills and “digital literacies” becomes essential to success in an increasingly innovation-based, global economy. Examples of such new skills and literacies include the ability to:

- effectively access, evaluate, and synthesize vast amounts of information;
- apply knowledge and skills to personal, workplace, and global challenges;
- work collaboratively in cross-cultural settings;
- solve problems creatively; and
- act ethically as citizens of the world community.

The SABIS[®] Educational System

The SABIS[®] Educational System is an integrated, comprehensive, kindergarten through twelfth grade academic program that has been developed and refined over a 125-year period. With a balance of academics, self-development, and life preparation, the SABIS[®] Educational System prepares its students for success in college, fosters a lifelong interest in learning, and develops responsible world-class citizens. It blends quality education with traditional values of hard work and responsibility for self and others.

The SABIS® Educational System consists of a demanding curriculum, an intense, disciplined, and interactive approach to deliver the intellectual material, and rigorous homework expectations.

In SABIS® schools, all students, regardless of their ability levels, can learn and achieve very high academic standards provided they want to learn. For this purpose, students undergo continuous monitoring to prevent the development of knowledge gaps during their learning process that could hinder further progress. By motivating students, fostering a desire to learn, and providing an efficient and high-quality educational experience, the SABIS® Educational System helps each student achieve his/her full potential.

Some important features of the SABIS® Educational System include:

- A safe, disciplined, and positive environment that encourages learning and responsible behavior;
- A well-structured and comprehensive curriculum;
- Books designed to dovetail precisely with the curriculum;
- Proven instructional methods that keep students engaged and learning efficiently;
- Timely tracking of student performance through regular assessment to fill any learning gaps;
- Cutting-edge educational tools to support the SABIS® program and enhance efficiency; and
- Student-led organizations that foster the development of initiative, leadership, self-confidence and positive attitudes and behaviors.

How BelovED Addresses Different Learning Styles and Special Needs

Guided by assessment data, we differentiate instruction to ensure that each scholar is taught in ways that help him or her make rapid academic progress.

In addition, BelovED uses sophisticated assessment tools to identify English Language Learners and students with other special needs, and then offers a variety of customized supports to these students to ensure that they fully succeed academically.

A Typical Student Day at BelovED

Schedules vary, but a typical day for a student might look like this:

7:40 am	Breakfast in the classroom
8:00 am	Morning Announcements
8:05 am	Start of the Instructional Day
1 ..	Three to Four Academic/Activity Periods of Varying Lengths (Avg. of 50 Minutes Each)
1 ..	Lunch and Recess
1 ..	Three to Four Academic/Activity Periods of Varying Lengths (Avg. of 50 Minutes Each)
4:00 pm	Closing Activities and Pack-Up
4:15 pm	Dismissal
4:30-5:30 pm	Afterschool Programming and Activities

- We schedule activities each week that are not only educational, but outright fun, to make school a joyous place to be
- All students have a snack time late in the school day
- There is a rest time for Kindergartners in the middle of the day
- In higher grades, periods are reserved each week for extracurricular activities, which are scheduled *during* the school day to increase participation in these important, skill-developing activities and to break up the academic work
- Students have Spanish 3-5 times a week
- BelovED's classes in the arts cover the visual arts, music, dance and theater
- Your child's homeroom instructor will provide a schedule for the days that your child must wear their PE uniform

Daily School Dismissal

At the beginning of the school year, each family is required to complete a dismissal form indicating the adults who may pick up their child at the end of the school day. Children will not be released to anyone not listed on the form. If someone other than the people indicated on the form will be picking up your child on a given day, you must send a note explaining the arrangement in the morning.

Students will be escorted to the BELOVED playground behind the school and families are expected to pick up their children at this time. A grace period of 15 minutes will be given. After that time, children not picked up will be sent to the Afterschool Program. After 4:30 p.m., all students remaining are considered to be in the Afterschool Program.

Early Dismissal

Please try to arrange appointments for after school whenever possible, and please appreciate that multiple early pick-ups may necessitate a parent conference, as taking your scholar out of school before the end of the school day can be disruptive to a class.

If you will need to pick up your child before the school day ends (prior to 3:45 pm), please provide advance notification to your child's teacher whenever possible. You will need to go to the office and sign the Early Dismissal Sign-Out Sheet. A child will be dismissed early only to a parent or other properly authorized and identified adult. A letter from you properly identifying another adult whom you authorize to pick up your child will be required.

We strongly discourage pick-ups between 3:45 and 4:15pm, as the office and staff are fully engaged in schoolwide dismissal procedures at this time.

Afterschool Programs

From 4:15 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., BelovED offers an array of afterschool academic programs, club activities, and a paid AfterCare Program.

These programs are provided for the benefit of BelovED scholars and working families. A number are offered free of charge. But please appreciate that these programs are not core elements of BelovED's education program, and scholars will not be permitted to participate in them if they do not adhere to school rules and policies, or if parents/guardians do not pick-up their scholars at 5:30 p.m., when the programs end. Late pick-ups will incur an Aftercare fee. And three or more violations of rules relating to pick-up time or scholar behavior will result in a scholar being removed from a program.

Also, please note that although some of these programs will provide scholars an opportunity to work on their homework, it is still vitally important that parents/guardians fulfill their responsibilities to check over their child's homework *at home*.

Homework = Life's Work

Homework is a critical part of each scholar's learning success. It reinforces learning that has taken place during the school day in a way that helps scholars truly master and retain newly learned skills and knowledge and just as importantly, it develops good study habits and scholar's academic self-discipline.

Indeed, at BelovED, homework is often called *Life's Work* because the self-discipline and the skills it develops are directly connected to all of the great things your scholar will be able to accomplish in life. Martin Luther King, Jr., didn't begin his life's work when he became active with the Civil Rights Movement. He began it when he was a small child and worked day-by-day to discipline himself and to develop his skills and character. It was only his childhood's life's work that made his later life's work possible.

It is vital, therefore, that parents/guardians show interest in their scholar's homework, and support their scholar's development of good study habits and academic self-discipline. Reserve a quiet, well-lit place at home where your scholar can do his or her homework each day. Help your scholar develop the self-discipline of doing his or her homework at a regular time daily, while he or she is still mentally sharp, not too tired. Encourage your scholar to review his or work before beginning, to confirm in his or her own mind its value as something that will him or her grow strong and able, and to think through the strategies he or she will use to complete it.

Scholars are responsible for returning homework promptly when due. Homework must be completed in full and in accordance with BelovED Community Charter School's high standards for quality work and professional presentation. Children who repeatedly fail to turn in completed homework assignments may be required to complete the work during Saturday school. If a child is having a problem with completing the homework assigned, please contact a teacher for assistance.

Homework Responsibilities

We hold BelovED's teachers accountable for creating a school-home connection regarding homework assignments, and for creating meaningful homework assignments that:

- reinforce classroom instruction;

- are varied in type;
- help students fully master and retain newly acquired skills and knowledge; and
- provide a way to check a scholar's mastery of new skills and/or knowledge.

In addition, we hold our teachers accountable, after homework is completed, for providing scholars with feedback on their work.

Scholars are expected to:

- promptly inform parents/guardians of any assignments given in class;
- accept responsibility for completing assignments on time, accurately, and neatly;
- complete any assignments missed due to absences;
- always try their best; and
- to *read* every day, even when homework-related reading is not assigned.

Parents/guardians are expected to:

- provide their scholar a time, and a well-lit, quiet place for daily homework;
- help their scholar develop the self-discipline of completing his or her assignments daily;
- be aware of their scholar's assignments, review his or her work, and assist as needed;
- ensure that their scholar completes assignments in line with BelovED's high quality standards;
- talk with their scholar about what he or she learned at school and through their homework, as well as the importance of these new skills, and through this, to encourage their child to develop a positive attitude about learning and their personal future;
- to read to or with their child *every* night for at least 15 minutes; and
- to provide regular, frequent opportunities for their child to read to them.

BelovED's Academic Year and Grading System

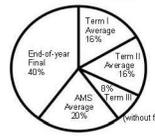
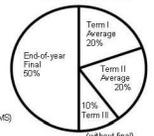
At BelovED, the academic year is divided into three trimesters.

- Throughout each trimester, we constantly assess our scholars' progress mastering new skills and knowledge items, so when a student is struggling with new learning, we can provide immediate assistance.
- In addition, for all Grades beyond Kindergarten, there are two Periodic Exams each trimester, covering approximately 4 weeks of new material each; and for all Grades including Kindergarten, there is a Final Exam at the end of each trimester.
 - All Periodic and Final Exams are preceded by a period during which previously learned material is reviewed.
 - The cycle of new learning, review, and examination helps our scholars move material from their short-term memory to their long-term memory, and to build an ever-compounding foundation of skill and knowledge item mastery.
 - In addition, the exam-provided objective evidence of students' learning progress works to increase students' confidence in their academic abilities and to make learning fun as students see themselves compounding mastery upon mastery. (Students are especially encouraged when exams show them having mastered skills or knowledge items that they initially found challenging.)

- Exams are not all equally weighted for grading purposes. The Exams at the end of the year and especially the Final Exam at the end of the third trimester are given extra weight.
 - Taking a data-driven approach to instruction, we work with students on skills which early exams indicate they have not fully mastered so that by the time the late exams that really count for their grade come along, they *have* fully mastered those skills.
 - This doesn't just help scholars *feel* like successful learners, it ensures that they *are* successful learners and develops their love of learning.
- Report cards are released 3 times a year to parents. Other, additional progress reports are also sent home from a scholar's teachers.

Report Card Sample

A sample of the Report Card students receive follows below. (The report card for kindergartners is somewhat different: it details scholars' developing skills and masteries.)

		Beloved Community Charter School 2012-2013 End-Of-Year Report Card	
Student: Beloved Grand St. Student Grade 01 Section A Student Number: 001		Academics	
Parent/Guardian: BelovED Community Charter School BCCS Staff, Board and Community Jersey City, NJ		Mathematics 99 English 99 Composition 96 Grammar 99 Handwriting 93 Phonics 99 Reading Comprehension 100 Spelling 100 Vocabulary 100 Grade 1 Spanish 100 Listening Comprehension 100 Oral Expression 100 Reading Comprehension 100 Vocabulary 100 Science 100 Social Studies 98 Physical Education Excellent Computers Excellent Art Excellent Health Excellent	Student Behavior Code Compliance with rules 10 Cooperation/Helpful 10 Effort 10 Good manners 10 Honesty 10 Punctuality 10 Respect 10 Responsibility toward acad. work 10 Self-control 10 Wise use of time at school 10 Student behavior scores can range from 0 to 10. 10 means the behavior is always exhibited. 0 means the behavior is never exhibited. **BEHAVIOR CODE HONOR ROLL**
Attendance Days Enrolled 187 Days Absent Excused 0 Days Absent Unexcused 0 Days Tardy Excused 0 Days Tardy Unexcused 0		Academic Average **ACADEMIC HONOR ROLL**	
Grading Information Letter grades for SABIS® schools correspond to the following percentages: 98 - 100% A+ 78 - 79% C+ 93 - 97% A 73 - 77% 90 - 92% A- 70 - 72% C- 88 - 89% B+ 68 - 69% D+ 83 - 87% B 63 - 67% 80 - 82% B- 60 - 62% - 59% & Below F At a SABIS® school, the three terms are not weighted equally for the end-of-year grade. The		Remarks:	
END-OF-YEAR GRADING With AMS:  Without AMS: 		Lead Person _____	

Promotion and Retention

The complete text of BelovED's policy relating to grade promotion and retention follows:

BELOVED'S PROMOTION AND RETENTION POLICY FOR GRADES KINDERGARTEN THROUGH FIVE

The mission of BelovED Community Charter School is to prepare students to succeed in college and in life. To fulfill that mission, the Board of Trustees recognizes that students should be placed at the grade levels to which they are best adjusted academically, socially, emotionally, and developmentally and which are age appropriate.

While BelovED's educational program provides for the continuous progress of students from grade to grade, with students spending one year in each grade, the Board of Trustees recognizes that, in some instances, students may benefit by repeating a grade level. The decision to retain a student will be made in consultation with the appropriate school officials constituting the school team and the parent/guardian. However, the final decision for retention shall rest with the Head Dean.

Grade level promotion shall depend upon students having achieved sufficient mastery of the prerequisite skills and knowledge for the next class or grade level. Throughout the year, teachers will assess students' mastery of sequenced academic standards and respond with appropriate interventions to help students progress academically.

To determine if students meet BelovED's standards mastery benchmarks for grade-level promotion, periodic, mid-course, and end-of-course tests will be given in each academic class and a weighted-average of each student's results will be calculated to yield a student score for the class. An overall score will also be calculated for each student's performance across academic subjects, with English Language Arts (ELA) and Math weighted more heavily. Students in grades one to five may be retained who fail ELA and/or Math or have a failing overall average. Kindergarten students will be retained if they are achieving significantly below grade level based on weekly and term assessments.

Summer School is offered to different classes of students:

1. Students who are being retained. Summer School is recommended for these students to bring them closer to the level that they need to be at in order to successfully master the academic standards (i.e., skills and knowledge items) of the grade in which they are being retained.
2. Students who are being promoted but lack full mastery of grade level academic standards. Summer School is recommended for students with a low but passing average in Math or ELA to better prepare them for the next grade level.
3. Students whose retention is uncertain. Summer School is required for students at risk of failing both Math and ELA or achieving a failing overall average. Promotion for these students is conditioned on the student successfully completing Summer School thereby meeting BelovED's research-based, standards mastery benchmarks for grade-level promotion

For students who meet the requirements for promotion, but have barely passing averages in Math or ELA, recommended academic interventions shall continue even after they enter the higher class or grade.

The school shall provide parents/guardians with regular written information, including report cards, relating to their children's academic scores, personal growth, attendance records and disciplinary records. The school shall inform parents/guardians when formative assessment data leads to their children receiving academic interventions and shall explain how these parents/guardians can support this work and help their children progress academically.

Teachers shall endeavor to meet with parents/guardians on a periodic, scheduled basis to provide them with a face-to-face review of their children's learning progress, and shall call when academic or behavioral issues warrant so parents/guardians are made aware of and can help solve the problem. Following each trimester, the school shall notify the parents/guardians of children whose pace of standards mastery puts them at substantial risk of not meeting the school's requirements for grade-level promotion. Parents/guardians shall be reminded of the school's promotion/retention policies, its Summer School requirements, and what they can do to support the school's academic interventions and help their children progress academically.

In May, teachers shall call and/or meet with parents/guardians whose children will need to attend Summer School and shall inform them of the subject areas in which their children need to increase their standards mastery, and what these parents/guardians can do to assist their children

If, after attending Summer School, a student whose retention is recommended still does not meet the standards mastery benchmarks necessary for promotion, staff shall call and/or meet with the student's parents/guardians to inform them that their child will be retained in their current grade.

If a parent/guardian wishes to appeal promotion/retention decisions, they may first petition the School Grievance Committee consisting of parents and teachers. If the parent/guardian wishes to appeal the decision of the Grievance Committee, the parent/guardian may petition the Board of Trustees.

Nothing in this Policy shall obligate the School to provide interventions beyond those required by law.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDANCE AND ON-TIME ARRIVAL

Research shows an *extremely* high correlation between students frequently missing or being late to school and academic failure. Learning can only occur in school if students are present. The frequent absence or tardiness of students from classroom learning experiences disrupts the continuity of the instructional process and limits the ability of students to complete curriculum requirements successfully. Parents/guardians and students are therefore expected to maintain a very high level of scholar attendance at school and on-time arrival.

Indeed, attendance is so important that New Jersey state law *requires* that BelovED document all days when a scholar is absent from school and categorize these days as either "excused" or "unexcused," in accordance with strict state regulations and procedures. BelovED will accordingly monitor your scholar's attendance closely throughout the year.

Excused Absences

Examples of absences that under NJ law are to be categorized as excused are those related to:

- Observance of state approved religious holidays. If a religious holiday extends over a period of days, only one day of absence may be excused for the particular holiday. A list of the State of New Jersey Approved Religious Holidays can be found at the NJ Department of Education website, www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/holidays1112.htm.
- Serious, acute illness or death within the immediate family.
- Required attendance at court.
- Visitation to secondary institutions for purposes of exploring enrollment.
- Medically verified physical or emotional illness (requires parental note with verification determination to be made by school nurse or a doctor's note after three consecutive days).

Per the last bullet point above, scholars should not attend school when exhibiting signs of illness. (Such signs include a fever of 100.2°F and above, productive or discolored nasal discharge or cough, a rash of unknown origin, or suffering from diarrhea or vomiting. See the "Health and Safety" section of this Handbook for complete signs of illness.)

That said, ALL excused absences, even those for medical reasons, require either *prior* arrangement with the school administration, or a note from a scholar's parent/guardian, upon the scholar's return to school, which explains the reason for the absence. Indeed, under NJ law, after three consecutive absences for medical reasons, a doctor's note is *required* for the absences to be considered excused.

Providing Notification and Explanation of an Absence

Parents/guardians are responsible for notifying the school in advance, or as early in the day as possible, when a child is to be absent, and for informing the school of the reason for the absence.

"Unexplained" absences are required to be classified as "unexcused." So when calling the school to provide notification of an absence, please provide the child's full name, *the reason for absence*, and the date(s) of absence.

If the school has not received advance notification or a morning phone call about the fact that a scholar will be absent, BelovED will contact the scholar's family. If there are instances where parents/guardians are permitting excessive absenteeism or late arrivals, or where the number of cumulative absences is high, letters will be sent home even if the absences are "excused." This is because under New Jersey law, a total of 18 absences in a school year is considered to be excessive and may result in retention.

Unexcused Absences

On a day when an absence/lateness is for reasons other than those noted above as "excused," the day of absence/lateness is recorded as "unexcused" and goes into your child's permanent record. Please note that family vacations and other non-educational activities are not included in the list of "excused" absences above. They are considered "unexcused" absences, and should be planned so they do not interfere with school attendance. Parents/guardians must assume full responsibility for all missed academic assignments, and should not expect teachers to provide work in advance of such absences.

Under state law and administrative code (NJSA 18:A and NJAC 6A), the following *Notification Process for Excessive Absences* must be followed when absences are "unexcused":

1) The Warning Letter: For 3 cumulative unexcused absences, the classroom teacher will generate a form letter that he/she will mail to the home of the student informing the parent/guardian of excessive absences. The teacher will keep a copy of the letter and also send a copy to the administration. This warning will state that because of excessive absences, their son/daughter is in danger of failing.

2) *Phone Call to Parent/Guardian: For 7 cumulative unexcused absences, a phone call will be made to the parent/guardian of the student alerting them that because of their child's excessive absences, he/she is in danger of failing.*

3) *Administrator & Parent Conference: If the excessive absences persist after the phone communication has been made, the Administration will require the parent come in for a conference regarding the excessive absences. The parent will be given a second in danger of failing notice to sign.*

4) *For cumulative unexcused absences of 10 or more, the student is considered truant. For students between the compulsory school ages, the school district will make mandatory referral to the court program as required by the **NJ Administrative Office of the Courts**. The school will make contact with the parents, cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, and will proceed in accordance with **NJSA 18A, Compelling Attendance at School**, and other applicable State and Federal statutes, as required.*

Court Fines / Denial of Grade Promotion for Excessive Absenteeism

BelovED will work with families to find solutions to attendance problems.

But it is important that parents/guardians understand that school attendance in New Jersey is compulsory and that under Title 18A, Chapter 38, Article 3 of New Jersey's Revised Statutes, the State of New Jersey could subject parents/guardians who permit excessive school absences by their children to court-imposed fines.

State law further stipulates that if a school has exhausted the above precautions, notices and warnings, and a scholar continues to accrue excessive absences, after the eighteenth chargeable absence, retention in their current grade for the upcoming school year becomes a possible result.

Absence During Testing Periods

If a scholar has an absence during BelovED or State standardized testing periods, which are advertised on the BelovED School Calendar, he/she will only be able to make-up the test during the scheduled retake period that follows the testing period. Scholars that miss testing days repeatedly may be called in for a parent meeting with the child's teacher. Moreover, missed exams during the scheduled retake period may result in a failing grade for that exam.

Absence and Afterschool/Evening Events

Please also note that except under previously approved and special circumstances, a scholar who is absent from school during the day may NOT participate in afterschool or evening events, and under no circumstances may a scholar who is absent due to illness participate in such events.

Tardy Arrivals

Scholars are expected to arrive to school and class on time. Being late to school takes precious educational time away from scholars, and can be disruptive to the rest of the class, and hinder their learning, as well. Therefore, tardiness should be avoided unless absolutely necessary.

Scholars must arrive before 8:00am to receive breakfast. If a scholar does not arrive by 8:05am, s/he is considered late to school.

Whenever circumstances necessitate that a scholar report to school late, the scholar's parent/guardian must escort the scholar to the front door and sign the scholar in at the security office. Scholars will then need to obtain a late pass to be admitted to class.

Consequences for Unexcused Tardiness

Under state law, five tardy arrivals are equal to an unexcused absence on a scholar's attendance record. Consistent tardiness can, therefore, result in grade non-promotion at the end of the school year.

To avoid such problems, BelovED will make a phone call home to parents after the third tardy arrival of a student, and will *require* a parent-teacher conference after the tenth.

CALLING, VISITING , VOLUNTEERING

At BelovED Community Charter School, we value an open and honest dialogue between parents and the school. Only in this way can we best meet the needs of our students. Parents have valuable information on their child's perceptions of school life. When things are not going well, we can be of tremendous assistance only if you bring the situation to our attention. It is school policy to address concerns on an individual basis. Please speak to your child's teacher first, then the Principal. You will always find us ready to talk about any concerns you may have.

That said, for security purposes, as well as for scheduling, all visits/tours should be arranged through the office, so approval can be obtained prior to the visit/tour, and all parents, guests and/or visitors must sign in at the office before visiting any classroom or taking a tour of the school.

Open Houses & School Tours

We are extremely pleased that our school families have chosen to enroll their scholar at BelovED Community Charter School.

To introduce parents/guardians to our staff and their scholar's teachers, and to give parents/guardians an opportunity to tour our school facility, we have scheduled an orientation for parents/guardians who are new to BelovED on Friday, August 30th, and a Back-To-School Night for all parents/guardians on Wednesday, September 18th.

We recommend that parents/guardians also tour the school during the school day when children are present. Tours will be available on Wednesday mornings, from November to June. Please call the office after November 1st to sign up for a tour. In addition, we recommend that parents attend PTO meetings and other family events that will be scheduled throughout the school year.

Parent Conferences and Class Meetings

At BelovED, teachers contact parents on an ongoing basis to discuss student progress. However, twice a year, we will have formal parent-teacher conferences. Please regard these as required meetings and as the best time to get an overview of plans and expectations for the year relating to your scholar.

You or the teachers should feel free to call each other or request additional conferences at any time. Issues or concerns should be brought promptly to the attention of the teacher or administration to ensure appropriate discussion and resolution.

Class meetings may be called at other times throughout the school year for a variety of reasons. Please make every effort to attend these meetings, as well.

Phone Calls and Individual Meetings

When you call a staff member, if she or he is available, your call will be immediately directed. If not, a message will be left, and your call will, in nearly all cases, be answered within 24 hours. When you call a teacher, to avoid interrupting instruction, a message will be taken and he or she will get back to you within 24 hours, if possible.

When interested in meeting with staff or faculty, we request that you make an appointment with the person you wish to see rather than just dropping in. The professional duties of our staff and faculty can make drop in visits difficult to accommodate. It also helps if, when making an appointment, you will describe the general nature of your inquiry so that the administrator or teacher can gather information about the matter. Your confidentiality will be respected when leaving such messages.

Visiting Classrooms

You are always welcome to visit the school and the classrooms. As mentioned above, visitors must sign in at the office, and out of courtesy to the teacher and students, it is requested that you arrange your visit with your scholar's teacher in advance. Please let the teacher know what you are most interested in seeing or how you might enjoy providing classroom help. Classroom visits should not last longer than an hour unless there is a special project or activity under way in which you are participating. When visiting, please work closely with the teacher to minimize classroom disruptions.

Volunteering at BelovED

BelovED Community Charter School encourages parent engagement with the school through frequent home-school communication, visits, and parent volunteer opportunities.

Volunteering is an especially rewarding way to be involved in the educational life of your scholar, and the school benefits, as well.

Some ways to volunteer include participating with BelovED's Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) or its Title I Parent Advisory Council, which you can read about on BelovED's website. Additional roles and/or duties for which parents or guardians can volunteer include:

- As "class parents"
- As "reading buddies"
- Coordinating or teaching an afterschool club
- Helping with lunch or recess duties
- Planning, organizing, setting-up, and cleaning up after school functions
- Fundraising
- Assisting with community outreach
- With PTO (Parent-Teacher Organization) events
- Contributing to our newsletter
- As a trip chaperone

Some volunteer opportunities may require fingerprinting and background checks. But when parents/guardians volunteer in the classroom, they have a wonderful opportunity to understand how and why we do what we do at BelovED Community Charter School, and to experience the thrill of seeing children learn.

If you'd like to volunteer but you're not sure what you'd like to do, contact your teacher or members of the PTO Executive Board and we'll help you lend a hand.

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND SECURITY

Should you have any health-related questions or concerns relating to your BelovED scholar, please call BelovED's school nurse. She is available from 8:00 a.m. until 4:15 p.m. daily.

BelovED Community Charter School has filed a comprehensive safety plan with the Hudson County Superintendent of Education's Office, as required by law. This plan covers every type of emergency and was created in collaboration with the Jersey City Police and Fire Departments, and County Department of Education.

The School has not had problems with security, but in the interest of keeping our scholars and staff safe, has security personnel, cameras, and systems in place all throughout the day.

Immunization Records/Health Forms

The State of New Jersey requires that each child be immunized in accordance with state requirements for children enrolled in school, and each child must have an annual physical

examination on file with the school nurse. If you have not provided the required immunization records or health forms, BelovED is not permitted to allow your scholar to attend classes until the paperwork is turned in.

Medication

Student medication (including homeopathic medicine) may not be kept in the classroom or in student lunch boxes or backpacks.

If prescription medication needs to be administered in school, the school nurse cannot administer it nor may other school personnel without a physician's consent form. These forms are available in the office.

Note, too, that the school will not administer non-prescription medicine (such as Tylenol) to students without written permission.

Sick or Injured Children

School personnel are trained in methods of dealing with illness or injury. A parent will receive a call from the school if the nurse, teacher, or office staff thinks there is a need. It is imperative, therefore, that parents provide phone numbers for use in emergencies, and that these numbers be kept up to date.

At the beginning of the school year, parents may give permission for school personnel to treat minor scrapes and bruises. More serious injuries are recorded on an accident form and will be reported to a parent before the student leaves school, or sooner, as appropriate.

A child who is not well enough to go outdoors is not well enough to come to school. Outside time is a regular part of our daily schedule and we have no supervision in place for children who would like to stay inside, apart from their classmates.

To avoid having your scholar get sick, please ensure that he or she is always appropriately clothed. During cold weather seasons, children should be dressed in attire appropriate for outdoor recess, including hats and gloves.

Accident Insurance

Our school is covered under a Student Accident Insurance Policy. Please contact the School Business Administrator for details.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

It is the school's legal obligation to report any sign of abuse or neglect to the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS).

UNIFORM POLICY

The purpose of the student dress code is to promote high standards of conduct and behavior among students, to instill a sense of personal pride in students, and to develop and maintain a wholesome learning environment that will contribute to academic achievement. The Board of Trustees acknowledges that proper dress and attire is an important part of the school program. The Board also recognizes that each pupil's mode of dress and grooming is an expression of personal style and individual preference.

If a student shows up without the correct uniform, a phone call will be made home indicating that the correct uniform needs to be brought to school immediately. The child will not be permitted to go to class until the correct uniform has arrived. If we are unable to get in contact with you the child will remain out of class for the day.

Parents should write the scholar's name in permanent marker on the tags of all clothing so that if it is lost it can be returned to you. Since every scholar wears the same clothing, mark your tags clearly.

For Boys

- **Shirt:** BelovED Community Charter School navy polo shirt with the school's logo. The shirt is available in short and long sleeves. An undershirt may be worn under the uniform shirt so long as it is not visible. Uniform shirts must be tucked in.
- **Pants:** Standard khaki-colored or tan pants or shorts. You may get the pants with a zipper or the pull-on. The pants need to fit correctly (no baggy style) with a belt.
- **Belt:** Solid dark-colored belt must be worn at all times.
- **Shoes/Sneakers:** Shoes must be a solid color and closed-toe due to safety. No bright colors or distracting patterns. No boots, no sandals, no flip-flops, no wheels, bells/lights/whistles are permitted. The shoe policy is the same in the winter months. Students must have on sneakers or shoes. If they wear boots to school they must change into the proper footwear before breakfast. On P.E. days, students should wear sneakers.
- **Socks:** Black, navy, or white socks may be worn.
- **Sweater (Optional):** BelovED Community Charter School navy sweater with the school's emblem or solid navy blue sweater

For Girls

- **Shirt:** BelovED Community Charter School navy polo shirt with the school's logo. The shirt is available in short and long sleeves. Shirts must cover the body without falling off the shoulder or exposing the torso. No undergarments should be seen.
- **Pants/shorts:** Standard khaki-colored or tan pants. The pants need to fit correctly (no baggy style) with a belt.
- **Skirts:** Standard khaki-colored or tan skirts. Shorts and skirts must be no more than two inches above the knee.
- **Shoes/Sneakers:** Shoes must be a solid color and closed-toe due to safety. No bright colors or distracting patterns. No boots, no sandals, no flip-flops, no wheels, bells/lights/whistles are permitted. The shoe policy is the same in the winter months.

Students must have on sneakers or shoes. If they wear boots to school they must change into the proper footwear before breakfast. On P.E. days, students should wear sneakers.

- Socks with pants: Black, navy or white socks may be worn. Girls may wear tights. The tights must be blue, black or white (no exceptions). No patterned tights are permitted.
- Sweater (Optional): BelovED Community Charter School navy sweater with the school's emblem or solid navy blue sweater
- Hats, bandanas, scarves, and sunglasses may *not* be worn during school hours.

For Boys & Girls

No large or distracting jewelry is permitted. Hair should not be distracting in color designs or cuts. Make up is not permitted. Nail polish should not be distracting in the classroom. This is up to the discretion of the administration.

Physical Education Uniforms

Starting in the 2013-14 school, scholars will wear uniforms on gym days. After assessing our program and looking ahead at future planned activities, our physical education team has determined that gym uniforms will be more suitable for gym activities going forward.

The uniform shall consist of:

- A gray T-shirt with our logo, which can be purchased at Jay's Uniforms located at 540 Westside Avenue in Jersey City, *or* the gray Field Day shirt if previously purchased.
- Navy Blue Sweatpants *or* Navy Blue gym shorts in warmer weather. All shorts must be longer than the child's fingertips when their hands are placed at their side.
- Sneakers. Any sneaker is acceptable, but we recommend against basketball shoes which will hinder movement for some activities. (Students wearing shoes on P.E. days may be asked to sit out of P.E. class for safety reasons.)

Backpacks

All students must bring a backpack to school for their homework and other assignments. *Roller bags are not permitted.*

Extra Clothing

All students must bring an extra change of clothes in the event of an accident or spill. Clothes should be sent to school in a plastic bag with the scholar's name written clearly in permanent marker.

- In the event that a student must change into the extra set of clothes, parents must send in a clean set of clothing the next day.
- If your student is prone to accidents, we recommend keeping more than one change of clothing at school.
- Spare clothes do not need to be uniform clothing; however, do not send jeans, shorts, or name-brand clothes.

Lost And Found

Please **label** your child's belongings, including jackets, sweatshirts, sweaters, coats, lunch bags and boxes, and all school materials so they can be returned to your scholar in his or her homeroom. Any items left in the school building after the end of the school day may be placed in the lost and found, located in the school security office.

Items that go unclaimed will be donated to a charitable organization at the end of each month.

DISCIPLINE

Safety, order and discipline are fundamental to learning. While students need a challenging curriculum, dedicated teachers and proper materials, they must also have a secure environment in which to learn. Therefore it is the policy of BelovED Community Charter School that a safe environment conducive to learning shall be maintained at school in order to provide an equal and appropriate educational opportunity for all students.

BelovED enforces a "zero tolerance policy" regarding discipline for certain infractions, including, but not limited to, the following: fighting; possessing, using, or threatening to use weapons; or the unlawful possession, use or distribution of drugs on school properties or at any school sponsored or supervised activity.

Scholars will be subject to disciplinary action if they engage in prohibited conduct while on school property, while attending any school-sponsored activity, or while in transit going to or returning from BelovED's campus (whether on foot, or via train, bus, or car). Such disciplinary action may include but not be limited to the following measures: suspension, expulsion, and/or exclusion from school and all school sponsored activities.

Scholars may also be disciplined for conduct committed away from school property and outside school hours if, for example, the conduct is detrimental to the best interests of the BelovED community, adversely affects overall school discipline, and/or results in a criminal charge or conviction.

In all such regards, BelovED shall always provide a fair and consistent approach to student discipline, within the context of scholars' rights and responsibilities.

Our Positive Approach to Discipline

Our approach to discipline is rooted in a belief that the learning environment is sacred. At BelovED Community Charter School, we will do whatever it takes to make sure that every child is safe (physically, emotionally, mentally, and intellectually) and to make sure that every child has the chance to learn without needless disruptions. We have very high expectations for student behavior, and we *ö*sweat the small stuffö to create and preserve a focused learning environment.

Our teachers will use a large array of strategies to promote positive behavior and to correct problem behaviors. Our faculty uses *positive* reinforcement whenever possible, and does its best

to “catch students doing the RIGHT thing.” We recognize and celebrate student successes at every opportunity.

We also use consequences and a problem-solving approach to help students fix behavior problems. Students may lose privileges (social time, trips, etc.) when they violate the rules.

Our Dean of Students is the point person on discipline issues. The Head Dean and Dean of Students have the authority to decide on the appropriate consequences for student behavior, but work closely with teachers, families, and students to help them learn and grow.

Expectations for Time on Task

BelovED Community Charter School does not tolerate classroom distractions because of its belief that one or two scholars should not be permitted to hold back an entire class. If scholars are being disruptive or are off-task, they will be subject to disciplinary actions (see the list below), and parents/guardians should expect regular calls from and conferences with faculty and staff so that an effective behavior plan might be implemented that solves the problem.

Zero Tolerance for Fighting

There is zero tolerance for fighting at BelovED. In almost every case, both scholars will be suspended. Parents will be required to come to school to pick up the scholar involved in the fight on the day of the incident, and to meet with school administrators regarding the conflict. The school encourages non-violent conflict resolution. Scholars are expected to use the techniques of conflict-resolution to settle all disputes in a non-violent manner and report conflicts to staff members before they escalate.

Disciplinary Actions

BelovED has schoolwide guidelines in place that govern in-class learning and behavior expectations, and for the consequences of violating these guidelines, to ensure that disciplinary actions are consistent. Disciplinary actions other than suspension or expulsion, etc., can include, but are not limited to:

- Exclusion from non-core classes
- Being Sent To The Office
- A Call To Parents/Guardians
- An Administrator/Parent/Scholar Conference
- An Administrator/Scholar Conference
- The Implementation Of A Behavior Plan
- Before Or After-School Detention
- Alternative Volunteer Service
- A Behavior/Academic Contract
- A Counselor/Parent Conference
- A Counselor/Scholar Conference
- A Counselor/Teacher Conference
- A Social Worker/Counselor Referral

- A Homeroom Switch
- In-School Suspension
- Loss Of Incentives
- Lunch Detention
- Parent Shadowing
- Peer Mediation
- Reflection Form
- Reprimands And Warnings
- Restriction Of Participation In After School And/Or Extracurricular Activities
- Schedule Adjustment(S)
- Time Outs
- Teacher/Parent Conference (E-Mail, Letter, Telephone)
- Teacher/Scholar Conference
- Removal From Additional Services Such As Buses Or Intensives

In addition, scholars may be subject to any of the disciplinary actions listed below.

Scholars who put the safety of themselves or others in danger may be suspended immediately. Should a parent/guardian refuse to pick up a child who is safety risk, the school reserves the right to contact outside services.

In-School Suspension and/or Dean's Office

In School Suspension is used when a child continues to misbehave or disregards the expectations outlined in the *Handbook*. While on in-school suspension, we hope to remove all distractions so that the child can focus strictly on academics. The parents will be notified when the decision to invoke in-school suspension is made.

The parent/guardian will be expected to come to school for a conference within 48 hours if their child is placed on in-school suspension. The length of the in-school suspension is directly related to the offense and whether the scholar has taken responsibility for their actions.

A scholar on ISS will not be permitted to:

- Attend field trips
- Eat lunch at scholar tables in cafeteria
- Speak with other scholars during class or during free time
- Participate in recess, PE, Art, Music or Spanish class
- Participate in after-school sports, music, or enrichment programs

Procedures for Short-Term Suspensions

A short-term suspension is a denial to a scholar of the right to attend school and to take part in any school function for any period of time up to and including four days.

When a scholar is suspended, the school shall pursue the following steps:

Investigation

- Notify the scholar of the charge(s)
- Accept information from the scholar and other persons who have knowledge of the incident. The scholar involved shall have the opportunity to express his/her side of the problem.
- Determine the accuracy of the charge(s) based on this information.
- A short-term suspension shall be imposed solely at the discretion of the Principal or the Dean of Scholars based on the information gathered.

Implementation

Once the Principal or Dean of Scholars have determined that a short-term suspension is warranted, he/she shall proceed as follows:

- Inform the scholar of the suspension and the reason(s).
- Notify the parent by telephone or in person.
- Send written notification, by the end of the school day when possible, to the parent or guardian, or arrange for notification to be hand-delivered or sent certified mail within 24 hours informing him or her of the suspension, the reason for the suspension, the length of the suspension, the right to appeal, and the scholar's right to return to school at the end of the suspension, and any conditions for that return (a reentry conference is mandatory). A copy of this notification is filed in the scholar's cumulative folder in the school.

Right of Appeal

A parent or guardian may make a written request to the school Principal to appeal a short-term suspension within twenty-four hours of receiving notification of the suspension. The Principal will schedule the Appeal Hearing within five working days of receiving the written request. The scholar may be represented at the hearing only by parents or guardians and one additional adult, who may be legal counsel, a member of the clergy, a social worker, etc. The school must be notified within 24 hours of the hearing if legal counsel will be present. The hearing will be conducted by the Principal. The hearing shall be closed to the public and may include the presentation of evidence, testimony, and questioning of those present. The hearing will not be recorded verbatim by stenographic, tape, or other means. The Principal will notify the parent or guardian of the decision within 24 hours of the Appeal Hearing. If the suspension is overturned, the cumulative record of the scholar and any other school-maintained records will reflect that conclusion.

If the suspension is upheld and the parent or guardian wants to continue the appeal process, the parent or guardian may make a written request to the BelovED Discipline Committee, within two days of receiving the Principal's Appeal Hearing decision, stating why the suspension should be reversed or modified. The Hearing Officer will schedule the Appeal Hearing within five working days of receiving the written request. The scholar may be represented at the hearing only by parents or guardians and one additional

adult, who may be legal counsel, a member of the clergy, a social worker, etc. The school must be notified within 24 hours of the hearing if legal counsel will be present. The hearing will be conducted by the BelovED Discipline Committee. The hearing shall be closed to the public and may include the presentation of evidence, testimony, and questioning of those present. The hearing will not be recorded verbatim by stenographic, tape, or other means. The BelovED Discipline Committee will notify the parent or guardian of the decision within 24 hours of the Appeal Hearing. If the suspension is overturned, the cumulative record of the scholar and any other school-maintained records will reflect that conclusion.

If the suspension is upheld and the parent or guardian wants to continue the appeal process, the parent or guardian make a written request to the BelovED Board of Trustees, stating why the suspension should be reversed or modified within two days of receiving the BelovED Discipline Committee Appeal Hearing decision.

The Hearing Officer will schedule the Appeal Hearing within five working days of receiving the written request. The scholar may be represented at the hearing only by parents or guardians and one additional adult, who may be legal counsel, a member of the clergy, a social worker, etc. The school must be notified within 24 hours of the hearing if legal counsel will be present. The hearing will be conducted by the BelovED Board of Trustees Discipline Committee. The hearing shall be closed to the public and may include the presentation of evidence, testimony, and questioning of those present. The hearing will not be recorded verbatim by stenographic, tape, or other means. The BelovED Board of Trustees will notify the parent or guardian of the decision within 24 hours of the Appeal Hearing. If the suspension is overturned, the cumulative record of the scholar and any other school-maintained records will reflect that conclusion. If the BelovED Board of Trustees Discipline Committee upholds the suspension, the suspension shall be imposed, and such decision will be final.

Procedures for Long-Term Suspensions and Expulsions

A long-term suspension is a denial to a scholar of the right to attend school and to take part in any school function for any period of time equal to or exceeding five school days. An expulsion is the denial to a scholar of the right to attend school and to take part in any school function permanently.

When a scholar commits an offense that is eligible for long-term suspension or expulsion, the school shall pursue the following steps:

Investigation

- Notify the scholar of the charge(s)
- Accept information from the scholar and other persons who have knowledge of the incident. The scholar involved shall have the opportunity to express his/her side of the problem.
- Determine the accuracy of the charge(s) based on this information.

- Send written notification, by the end of the school day when possible, to the parent or guardian, or arrange for notification to be hand-delivered or sent certified mail within 24 hours informing him or her of the disciplinary infraction, the date and time for the Suspension or Expulsion Hearing, the right to appeal the outcome of the Suspension or Expulsion Hearing, and the scholar's status pending the hearing. A copy of this notification is filed in the scholar's cumulative folder in the school.
- The Principal will schedule the Suspension or Expulsion Hearing within two days of the disciplinary infraction. The scholar may be represented at the hearing only by parents or guardians and one additional adult, who may be legal counsel, a member of the clergy, a social worker, etc. The school must be notified with 24 hour advance notice if legal counsel will be present. The hearing will be conducted by the Principal. The hearing shall be closed to the public and may include the presentation of evidence, testimony, and questioning of those present. The hearing will not be recorded verbatim by stenographic, tape, or other means. The Principal will notify the parent or guardian of the discipline decision within 24 hours of the Suspension or Expulsion Hearing.

Implementation

Once the Principal or Principal's Designee have determined that a long-term suspension or expulsion is warranted, he/she shall proceed as follows:

- Inform the scholar of the suspension and the reason(s).
- Notify the parent by telephone or in person.
- Send written notification, within twenty-four hours of the Suspension or Expulsion Hearing to the parent or guardian, or arrange for notification to be hand-delivered or sent certified mail within 24 hours informing him or her of the suspension, the reason for the suspension or expulsion, the length of the suspension, the right to appeal, and the scholar's right to return to school at the end of the suspension, and any conditions for that return (a re-entry conference is mandatory). A copy of this notification is filed in the scholar's cumulative folder in the school.

Right of Appeal

A parent or guardian may appeal the decision of long-term suspension or expulsion within two days of being notified of the long-term suspension or expulsion. The parent or guardian may make a written request to the BelovED Discipline Committee, stating why the suspension should be reversed or modified. The Hearing Officer will schedule the Appeal Hearing within five working days of receiving the written request. The scholar may be represented at the hearing only by parents or guardians and one additional adult, who may be legal counsel, a member of the clergy, a social worker, etc. The school must be notified with 24 hour advance notice if legal counsel will be present. The hearing will be conducted by the BelovED Discipline Committee. The hearing shall be closed to the public and may include the presentation of evidence, testimony, and questioning of those present. The hearing will not be recorded verbatim by stenographic, tape, or other means. The BelovED Discipline Committee will notify the parent or guardian of the decision within 24 hours of the Appeal

Hearing. If the suspension is overturned, the cumulative record of the scholar and any other school-maintained records will reflect that conclusion.

If the suspension is upheld and the parent or guardian wants to continue the appeal process, the parent or guardian may make a written request to the BelovED Board of Trustees, stating why the suspension should be reversed or modified within two days receiving the BelovED Discipline Committee Appeal Hearing decision. The Hearing Officer will schedule the Appeal Hearing within two days of receiving the written request. The scholar may be represented at the hearing only by parents or guardians and one additional adult, who may be legal counsel, a member of the clergy, a social worker, etc. The hearing will be conducted by the BelovED Board of Trustees Discipline Committee. The hearing shall be closed to the public and may include the presentation of evidence, testimony, and questioning of those present. The hearing will not be recorded verbatim by stenographic, tape, or other means. The BelovED Board of Trustees will notify the parent or guardian of the decision within 24 hours of the Appeal Hearing. If the suspension is overturned, the cumulative record of the scholar and any other school-maintained records will reflect that conclusion.

If the BelovED Board of Trustees Discipline Committee upholds the suspension, and a parent or guardian wants to appeal the decision further, the parent or guardian may appeal the decision to the New Jersey Commissioner of Education.

Make-Up Work for Suspension

Scholars who are suspended shall be offered make-up work assignments. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to contact the school and make arrangements for the receipt and return of all assignments. In the case of long-term suspensions, unless other arrangements are made, teachers are to give work in two-week increments, and scholars must complete and return work before receiving additional work. All IDEA mandates will be followed for scholars with disabilities.

Participation at School and School-Related Activities

Scholars who have been suspended from school shall not be eligible to participate in any school functions for the entire period of their suspension.

Repeat Offenders

Scholars who continue to receive suspensions, whether in-school, short, or long term may be expelled from BelovED. Scholars who have been suspended 3 or more times in their entire duration at BelovED may be expelled.

Due Process Procedures for Scholars with Special Needs

Scholars with disabilities have the same rights and responsibilities as other scholars, and may be disciplined for the same behavioral offenses. A multidisciplinary team will hold a manifestation meeting to determine if an incident was a manifestation of a scholar's disability. If the team

finds that an offense was a manifestation of a scholar's disability, the scholar's disciplinary consequences, and the potential development or revision of a behavior plan, will be adjusted appropriately.

Loss of Privileges

BelovED Community Charter School offers scholars many privileges that can be taken away as a consequence for poor behavior. Privileges that can be lost include: specials, choice time, participation in birthday celebrations, participation in field trips, coming to school early or staying late, participating in after school activities, use of school transportation, and socializing with classmates during snack time, breakfast, or lunch.

Detention/Reflection Time

Detention or reflection time may also be assigned a scholar as a consequence of poor behavior. Detention or reflection time may occur after school or on Saturdays.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

BelovED's policy relating to substance abuse follows:

BelovED Substance Abuse Policy

Any student who is suspected to be under the influence of a controlled substance will be required to have an immediate physical examination and drug test by a physician. If a student's parent cannot arrange an immediate examination then the school will take the student to the school's physician. The student will also be subject to suspension for up to 24 hours while the school determines the results of these tests. If the test results are positive then the student will have to have an evaluation and assessment done by a drug and alcohol counselor to determine the nature and severity of the problem. The student must then follow the given recommendations and treatment in order to continue at BelovED Community Charter School. Violations may result in expulsion. Selling or use of controlled substances on school property may also result in expulsion.

SCHOOL SEARCHES

BelovED Community Charter School authorizes the Head Dean (BelovED's Principal) and the Head Dean's designee(s) to conduct searches of students and their belongings if the authorized

school official has reasonable suspicion to believe that the search will result in evidence that the student violated the law or any of BelovED Community Charter School's rules. In authorizing searches, BelovED Community Charter School acknowledges both state and federal constitutional rights which are applicable to personal searches of students and searches of their possessions.

An authorized school official may search a student or the student's belongings based upon information received from a reliable informant. Students have no reasonable expectation of privacy rights in school lockers, cubbies, desks, or other school storage places. BelovED Community Charter School exercises overriding control over such school property, which may be opened and subjected to inspection at any time by school officials. BelovED Community Charter School will provide notification to parents/families if a search has taken place as soon as is practicably reasonable.

HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, AND BULLYING POLICY

The complete text of BelovED's policy relating to harassment, intimidation, and bullying follows:

BelovED Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) Policy

The Board of BelovED Community Charter School prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying by or toward any students or school community members.

A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. "Harassment, intimidation or bullying" is defined as any gesture or written, verbal or physical act, or any use of electronic or wireless communication (including telephone, cell phone, computer, or pager) whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents, that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school grounds, at any school-sponsored function or on a school bus, or off school grounds, in accordance with law, that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students, and that:

- A. A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in*

reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property; or

- B. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or*
- C. Creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with the student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.*

Consequences for a student who commits an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall be varied and graded based on a variety of factors, including the developmental age and maturity levels of the parties involved, the levels of harm, the nature of the behaviors, past incidences or past or continuing patterns of behavior and performance, and the relationships between the parties involved. Consequences for students who commit acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion. Remedial actions for individual students who commit such acts may include a behavioral assessment or evaluation and/or supportive interventions and referral services. Consequences and/or remedial actions for a staff member who commits an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying shall be discipline in accordance with school policies, procedures, and agreements.

School leadership is responsible for receiving complaints alleging violations of this policy. All school employees are required to report alleged violations of this policy to school leadership. All other members of the school community, including students, parents, volunteers and visitors, are encouraged to report any act that may be a violation of this policy. School leadership, including the principal or the principal's designee, is responsible for determining whether an alleged act constitutes a violation of this policy. In so doing, school leadership shall conduct a prompt, thorough and complete investigation of the alleged incident for any report of policy violations and complaints.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are an important part of the curriculum at BelovED Community Charter School and each class is expected to have a number of trips during the year. All parents should have signed a release for walking trips in Jersey City and other communities in New Jersey before the school year begins. A permission slip must be signed for each trip involving transportation or your scholar will not be able to participate. Notices and permission slips will be sent home before each field trip. Please return these forms in a timely manner.

Rules of safety and behavioral expectations are discussed with scholars and adults before every field trip. Children who are not able to follow directions or basic rules of safety will be asked not to participate.

Chaperoning a Field Trip

The primary responsibility of chaperons is to assist the teacher. This means knowing in advance what kind of help the teacher will need. This usually includes keeping track of the scholars, keeping scholars involved in the slated activities, and making sure scholars listen and are polite when someone is talking.

TRANSPORTATION

BelovED offers free bus transportation to and from school as a privilege, not as a core part of its school program. Scholars shall ride only their assigned bus and board and disembark at their assigned stops. Any changes in these assignments must be approved in writing by school administrators who will inform the bus driver of the change. Changes may or may not be possible due to bus capacity and routing. Any request for changes from parents may take up to 7 working days for change confirmation.

Scholars are required to follow the rules and regulations of riding a public school bus. The driver of a school bus shall have complete authority over and responsibility for the operation of the bus and maintaining good conduct upon the bus. The driver or any bus attendants shall report to school administrators any misconduct on the bus or any violation of the driver's instructions. The Head Dean (BelovED's Principal) or the Head Dean's designee may take action on any misconduct, which occurs on a school bus, the same as if the violation had occurred on school grounds.

Scholars who fail to comply with the rules may be suspended and/or removed indefinitely from receiving bus service if the violation warrants.

LUNCH PROGRAM

Scholars may bring their lunches to school in lunch boxes or paper bags. We do not provide refrigeration, or cups. Please include everything your child will need when the lunch is packed.

The trading of lunch items among scholars is discouraged. Many children have serious allergies. A table is provided for those scholars who are allergic to peanuts or have other serious allergic reactions to food.

Carbonated beverages, candy, and other items containing sugar are not considered nutritious. It takes constant awareness on everyone's part to help scholars develop nutritious eating habits. And please, no gum.

Scholars who are purchasing the school lunch must bring their money daily. Teachers will not keep track of money on a weekly or monthly basis. Please send your child in with an envelope clearly marked "LUNCH MONEY" or "BREAKFAST MONEY" with the child's name on the envelope.

Fees for lunch are as follows:

Paid scholars:	\$ 1.35 for breakfast and \$2.50 for lunch
Reduced Price Scholars:	\$.30 for breakfast and \$0.40 for lunch.

Scholars become eligible for free or reduced price lunches by filling out a lunch application. *All families need to fill out the application, even if they do not wish to receive free lunch or purchase lunch.* Please do so: the completion of these applications by all families helps our school qualify for federal aid.

CELL PHONES AND ELECTRONICS

Scholars should not have electronic devices in school. Electronic devices include hand-held games and portable stereos (*iPods*). None of these devices are needed and often represent a distraction from successful academics and a serious atmosphere. In addition, these are items that cause conflict and lead to grief when lost or stolen. While BelovED obviously strives to prevent theft of any item, the school will not endeavor to track down electronic devices that should not be in school in the first place.

We do understand the importance of parent communication with children after school hours. Any scholar who has a cell phone will be asked to turn it off and keep it in their backpack until dismissal. Please call the school office if you need to communicate with your child during school hours. Please note that lost or stolen cell phones are not the school's responsibility. Cell phones may be confiscated if not kept in the scholar's backpack or used at the appropriate time.

In the event that a scholar disobeys these rules and is seen with an electronic device or uses a prohibited electronic device in school, a staff member will confiscate it. It will be returned only after a parent/guardian has come to school to pick it up.

INTERNET AND COMPUTER POLICY

The BelovED Community Charter School computer network is provided for scholars to conduct research, complete assignments and tests. Access to network services is given to scholars who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Access is a privilege—not a right—and entails responsibility.

Scholars are responsible for good behavior using any and all technology, just as they are in a classroom or school hallway. Computer network storage (hard drives and personal folders) may be treated like school lockers. Network administrators and teachers may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly. The following misuses of the computer system are not permitted:

- Sending and/or displaying hateful or pornographic messages or pictures
- Using abusive, threatening or inappropriate language
- Harassing, insulting or attacking others
- Engaging in or promoting violence
- Engaging in racial, gender, or other slurs
- Receiving or transmitting information pertaining to weapons, such as bombs, automatic weapons, illicit firearms or explosive devices
- Damaging technology equipment (computer systems, computer networks, TVs, VCRs, digital cameras, scanners, etc.)
- Violating copyright laws (copying internet or other materials without permission)
- Using others' passwords
- Trespassing in other scholars and/or teachers' folders, work, or files
- Intentionally wasting limited resources
- Employing the computer network for commercial purposes
- Transmitting personal information without written parental consent
- Accessing areas considered borderline without written parental consent
- Hacking (attempt to gain unauthorized access to files, folders, and/or other systems)

All scholar internet usage is monitored and managed with our electronic monitoring systems. Violations will result in loss of computer use and/or other disciplinary or legal action as appropriate.

HOLIDAYS

A central strength of BelovED is the diversity of its members. To protect and maintain this diversity, BelovED does not celebrate religious holidays in the course of the school year, nor are holidays used to drive the curriculum, but the observance by scholars of religious holidays are grounds for an excused absence. Moreover, religion and cultures may be appropriately explored as part of the curriculum and in response to children's questions, and children and parents are encouraged to share and discuss their particular customs, traditions, foods, and songs with the class and teachers. Any community meetings held around holidays will be of a secular nature.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Scholars are permitted to bring store-bought goodies, or goodies ordered through our Food Services provider, to be shared with classmates if the teacher is notified in advance. Please notify the teacher within 24 hours by writing a note or leaving a message. The treats must already be

prepared in individual servings. Birthday celebrations shall not occur during instructional time and are scheduled at the teacher's convenience.

Birthday treats should be easy and quick to serve. Parents must provide plates, napkins, and utensils as necessary ó BelovED will not provide these items. If you choose to bring ice cream, please bring individually wrapped ice cream treats. Helium balloons are not permitted since these often become stuck on the ceiling. Individual goodie bags are permitted as long as every scholar in the scholar's class receives one. Parents are not required to send birthday treats to school. Please do not distribute invitations to your child's out-of-school birthday party at school unless you are inviting the entire class or having a gender-specific party.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees meets monthly to discharge its fiduciary and oversight duties as per New Jersey Law. Parents are represented on the Board of Trustees, and all parents are invited to attend the meetings, which are open to the public.